



Lifeline Modernization

(WC Docket 11-42, WC Docket No. 09-197, WC Docket No. 10-90)

It is Imperative that the FCC Approve an Effective Broadband Lifeline Program: *Internet For All Now!*

The Country Is Stronger With Everyone Connected to the Network

- This was true when it was the public telephone switched network and it is true for the broadband. The Internet is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. (FCC State of Broadband Report January 2016)
- Internet and Digital Literacy are key to growing a competitive U.S. economy and generating living wage jobs. (FCC Lifeline Order 2013)
- Today smartphone adoption has reached parity with home broadband adoption (68% of Americans now report that they own a smartphone), and 13% of Americans are “smartphone-only” – up from 8% in 2013. Some of the most significant changes in these adoption patterns are taking place among African Americans, those with relatively low household incomes, and those living in rural areas.ⁱ
- Additionally, a recent Pew Research Center survey found that those who use smartphones for job searches face challenges when it comes to key tasks such as filling out job applications and writing cover letters. Low-income students need affordable home access to close the Homework Gap.

More Than a Quarter of the Population is Not Connected

- 33%ⁱⁱ of U.S. households do not have high-speed Internet access at home--are stuck on the other side of the Digital Divide up against a “wall of poverty”. Affordable broadband is an integral component of a comprehensive approach to tackle concentrated and persistent poverty.
- 43%ⁱⁱⁱ of those without Internet at home say cost is the reason. It is the high monthly cost and cost of a computer. The poor should not be relegated to aging copper-based phone systems and slow broadband services carried over it in an outdated Lifeline program.
- There are almost 3 times as many other low-income households without children in school as there are families on NSLP.
- There is ample evidence that being connected enables low-income households to become more self-sufficient—technology is empowering and transforming.
- There are 3 barriers a successful broadband adoption program for low-income households must address: (1) cost; (2) relevance; and (3) digital literacy. CETF and partners have documented experience in increasing broadband adoption.

FCC Has Made Significant Progress Stopping Waste, Abuse and Fraud

- ✓ Eliminated waste, fraud, and abuse, saving up to \$2 billion over 3 years
- ✓ Established a National Lifeline Accountability Database that prevents carriers from receiving support for the same subscriber (as of January 2014).
- ✓ Increased use of eligibility databases from government safety net programs automates the verification process and streamlines enrollment and codified one subsidy per household.

FCC Can Promote Digital Literacy with an Effective Program

- Set goals will drive performance. An example is Goal 3 in the NBP which states “The FCC needs to see that every American has access to relevant, age-appropriate digital literacy education for free, in whatever language they speak, and we need to create a Digital Literacy Corps.”
- Support programs such as the FCC Connect2Compete (EveryoneOn). The FCC can champion meaningful use to federal agencies by incorporating increased digital literacy training and broadband adoption support into online platforms, training programs, and services.
- Continue as a leader in encouraging meaningful use of broadband by making services, data and information readily accessible and regularly evaluating online accessibility and use.
- Reference the NPRM Digital Literacy comment and authorize USAC and states to do more.

5 Recommendations to Make Internet for All Work

1. Include All Low-Income Households

- Expand to all low-income HHs: seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans.
- Require a wireless router to be compatible with most school issued devices.
- \$10 a month contribution from those eligible except those in publically subsidized housing and those living on SSI.
- This Program should augment the Telephone Lifeline and not force consumers to choose between the two necessary technologies and programs.

2. Utilize and Continue to Improve the National Verification Process

- Use the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) for Broadband Lifeline.
- The database must be able to identify consumers and verify eligibility.
- Establish a process so that state databases granted waivers can be queried to prevent consumers from falsifying their identity.
- Champion meaningful use among other federal agencies.

3. Establish an Independent Fund(s) and Coordinate with States

- Use the authority that was used to set-up the NLAD and direct USAC to set-up an independent fund, with a portion of USF (Lifeline and eRate), to support community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and libraries (as “trusted messengers”) to assist enroll eligible households and participate in true public-private partnerships that can be administered through state regulatory commissions that opt in (a multi-state fund for rest of nation) with fund managers selected through an open, competitive process.
- Foster sincere and effective public-private partnerships that grow the reach of Connect2Compete.

4. Authorize States to Establish Broadband Lifeline Programs

- Encourage state strategies and alignment of resources to accelerate broadband adoption.

5. Set Performance Goals and Establish a National Oversight Committee

- Increase penetration rate to reach NBP goal of 90% by 2020 with disadvantage populations no less than 80%.
- Include company executives, federal departments, stakeholders and experts.
- Ensure transparency and accountability for results.
- Establish a mechanism to engage other partners and coordinate resources.

Note: Continue to require an affordable rate and digital inclusion public benefit of all cable and telecom companies proposing acquisitions or mergers as well, at least until new Lifeline program is operative.

Growing Support for 5 Recommendations to Secure Affordable *Internet for All Now!*

- 100+ elected officials and leadership organizations support the 5 Recommendations.
- Individuals have sent 115,000+ messages to FCC.
- FCC action on an effective Broadband Lifeline advances the National Broadband Plan.

Sunne Wright McPeak
California Emerging Technology Fund
(415) 744-2383

Rachelle Chong
Legal Counsel
(415) 215-4292

ⁱ PEW Research Center, Home Broadband 2015 <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/>
Those who are “[smartphone-dependent](#)” for access do encounter distinct challenges. Previous Pew Research Center findings show that they are more likely than other users to run up against data-cap limits that often accompany smartphone service plans. They also more frequently have to cancel or suspend service due to financial constraints.

ⁱⁱ PEW Research Center, Home Broadband 2015 <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ditto